

Learning
Stories

DOLPHIN BOOKS, BEIJING



The Hornbills Build a House



Learning Stories

The Hornbills

Build a House

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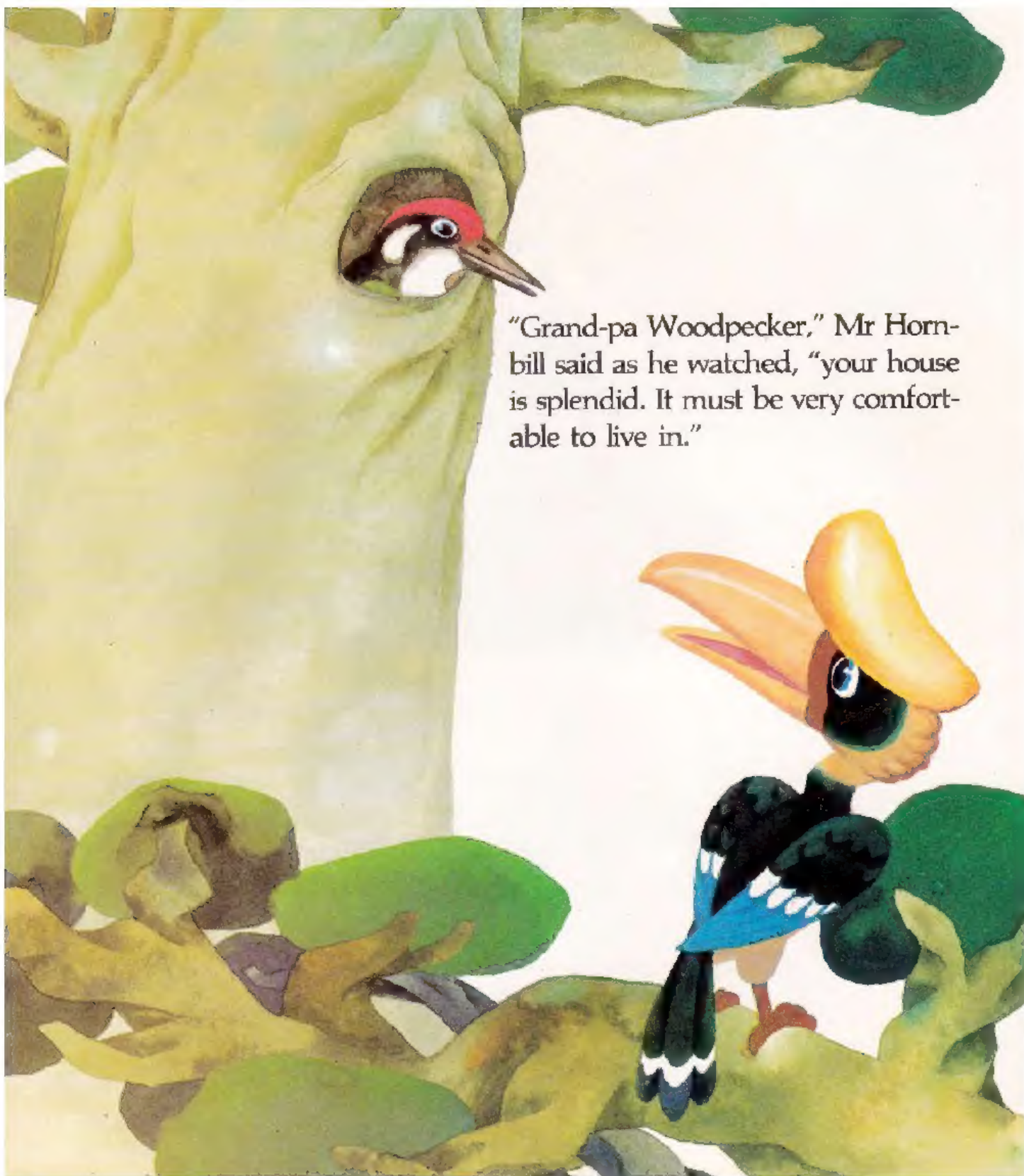
Spring is coming, and once again it's time for Mrs Hornbill to hatch her babies. But today, she is worried because she does not have a house yet.

"Don't worry," said Mr Hornbill, "I'll take a look and see how our friends are building their houses." And then he flew away.





High up in a big tree, Grand-pa Woodpecker is pecking a hole with his beak. Inside, he'll make a bed of soft sawdust and thatch.



"Grand-pa Woodpecker," Mr Hornbill said as he watched, "your house is splendid. It must be very comfortable to live in."



After saying this, he went on his way. Ho, uphead he spys Aunt Kingfisher's house in a mud cave on the river bank. The dry grass she hung over the entrance looks like a curtain.

Aunt Kingfisher catches fish and shrimp in the river using her long, pointed beak. She spreads the fish bones and scales on the floor in her house.





Seeing this, Mr Hornbill thought to himself how practical Aunt Kingfisher's house was.



Flying along the river Mr Hornbill saw Mr and Mrs Grebe building their house on the water amidst the reeds.



They piled stems of grass and reeds in a heap and then spread grass and feathers on top. The house looks like a boat and what's more it can float along in the water like its sailing.



"The Grebes' house is really ingenious,
Mr Hornbill thought to himself as he
looked on in fascination.



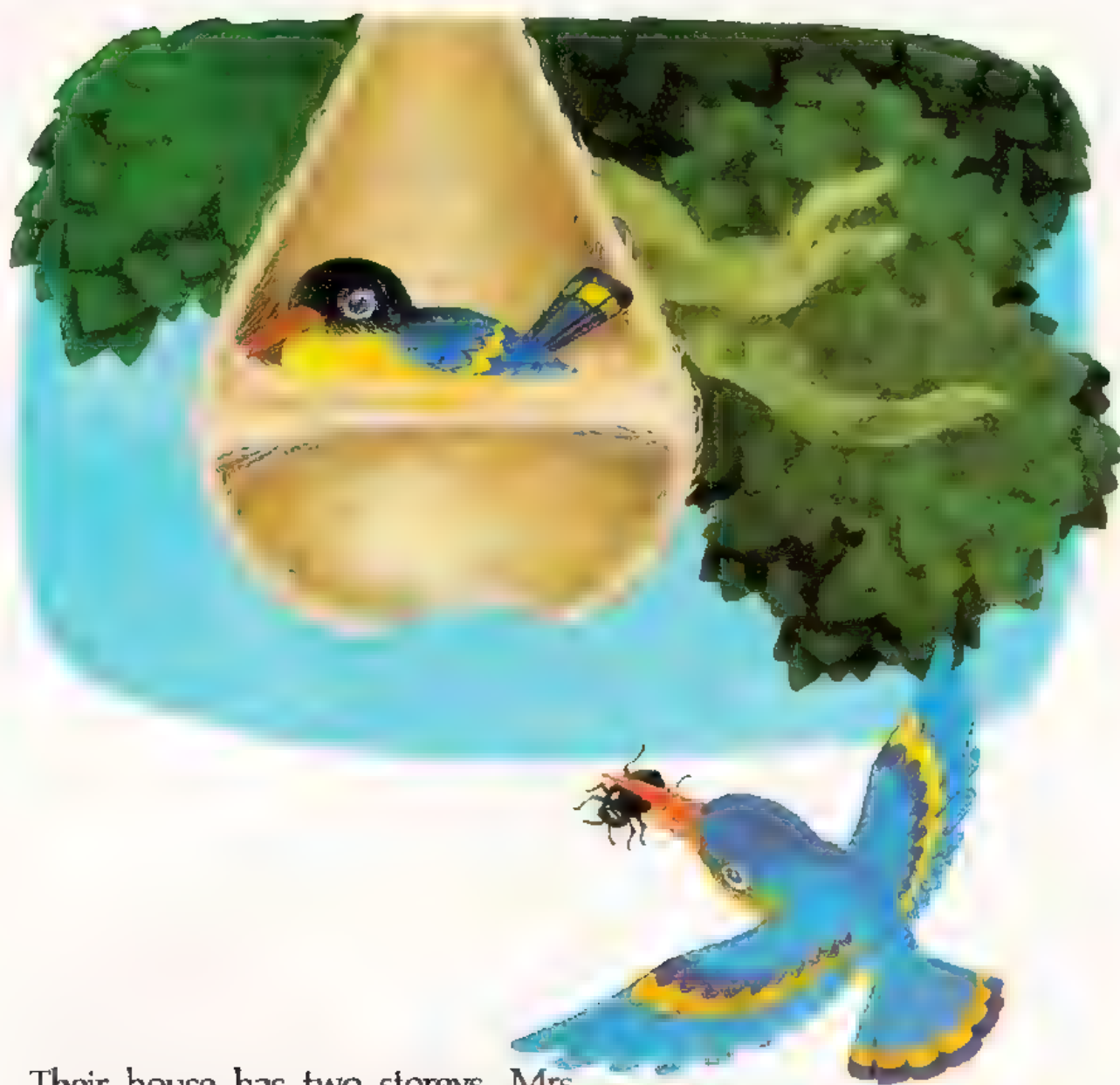


And then, he decided to
go back and build his
own house.





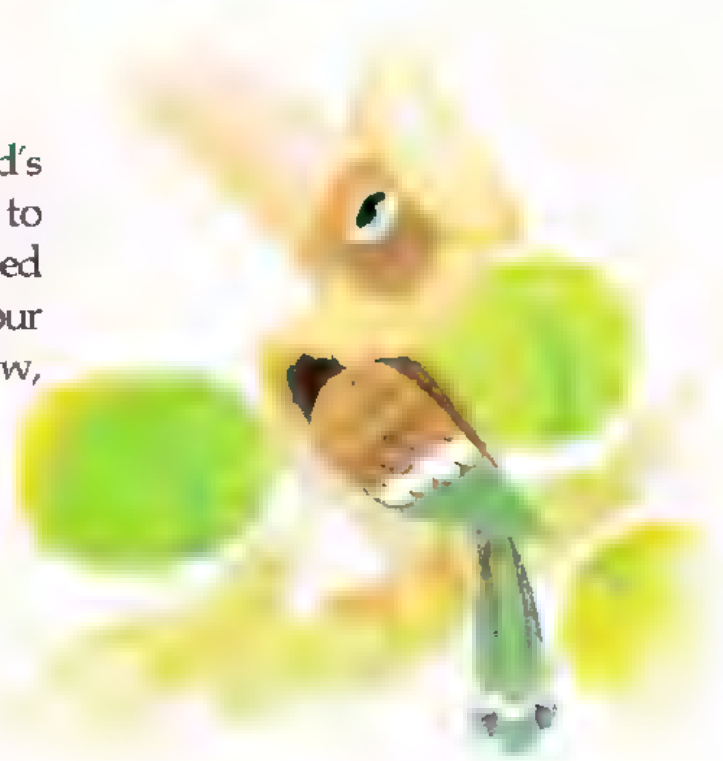
On his way back, he saw Mr and Mrs Weaverbird weaving a house that looked like a pear using grass for thread and their pointed beaks for needles.



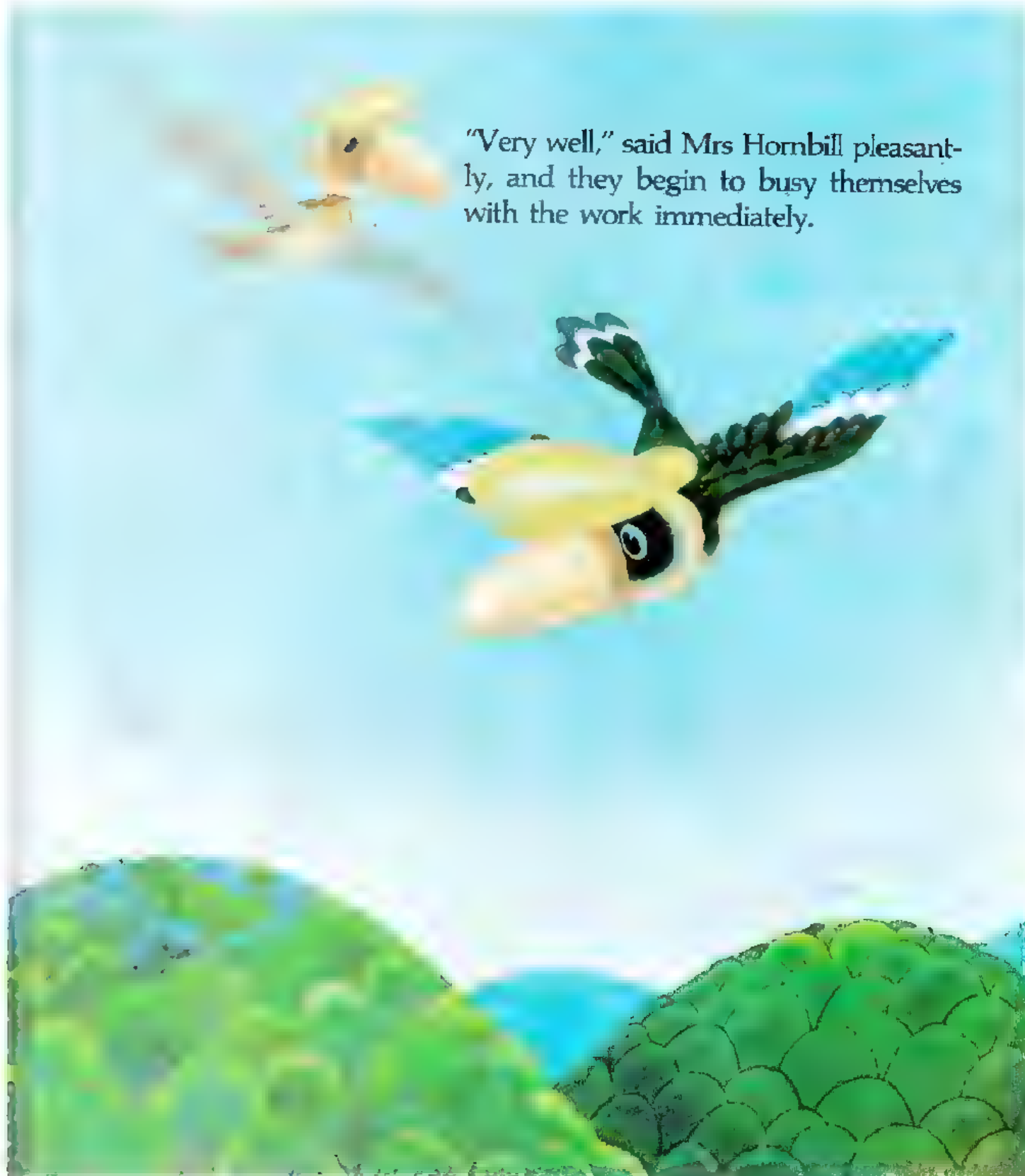
Their house has two storeys. Mrs Weaverbird will hatch her babies on upstairs, and her husband will bring her food and water through the little hole downstairs.



Having seen the Weaverbird's house, Mr Hornbill flew back to his wife and said: "I have learned a lot of things by watching our friends build their houses. Now, let's build our own house."




"Very well," said Mrs Hornbill pleasantly, and they begin to busy themselves with the work immediately.

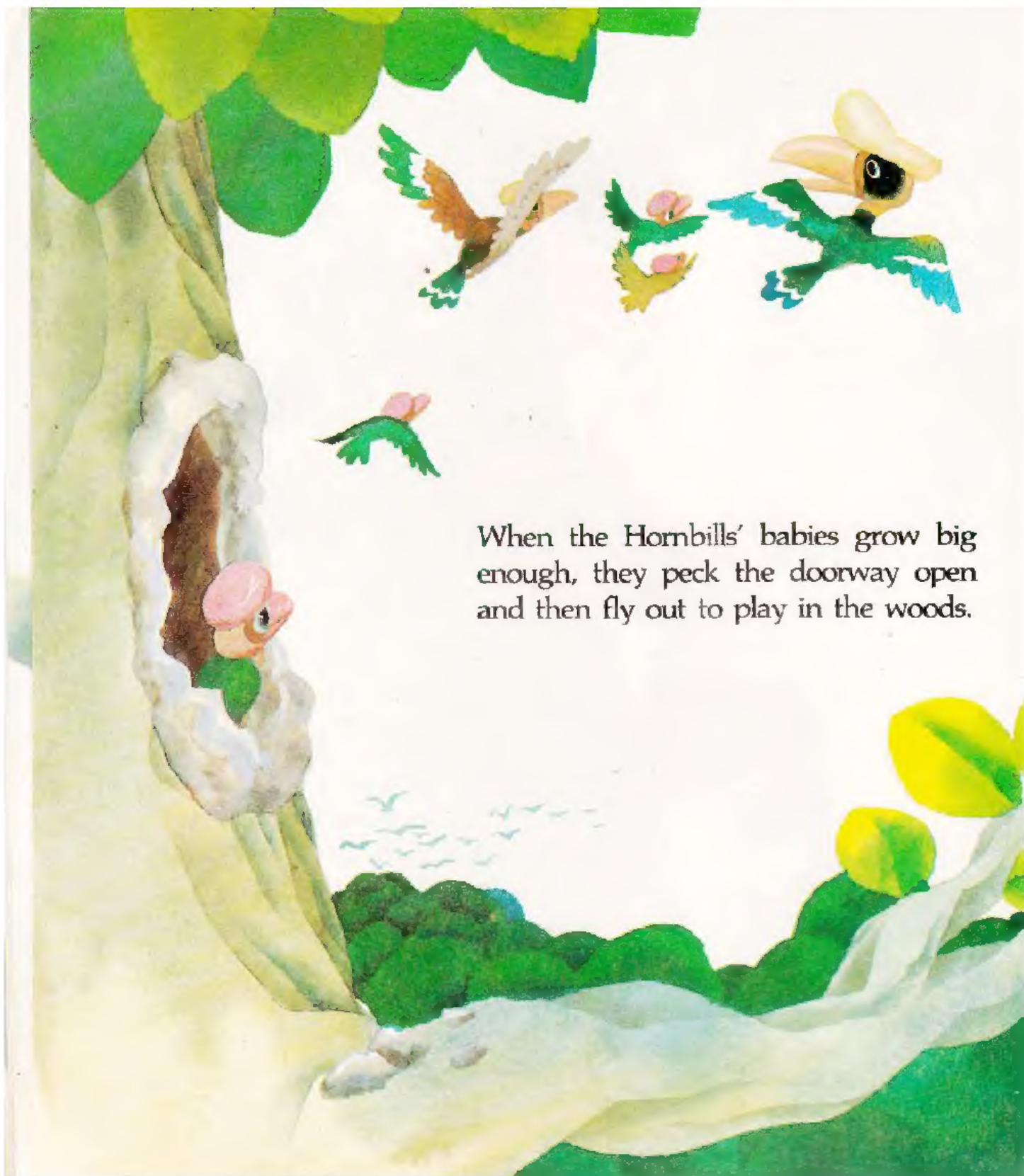




First they found a hollow in a tree, and Mr
Hornbill spread thatch in it.

An illustration of a Hornbill bird perched on a tree branch. The bird has a large, yellow, helmet-like casque on its head, a long, yellow beak, and a black face with a white ring around its eye. Its body is primarily black with blue and white markings on its wings and tail. It is looking into a circular nest opening in a tree trunk. Inside the nest, another bird is visible, lying down. The nest is made of mud and lined with white material. The background shows green leaves and the textured bark of the tree.

Mrs Hornbill lay down on her stomach inside the house, waiting to hatch her babies while her husband closes the doorway with mud and sawdust stuck together with his saliva. He leaves a little window so he can bring food to his wife.



When the Hornbills' babies grow big enough, they peck the doorway open and then fly out to play in the woods.

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